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3/1/81
1751 N STREET N.W. WASHINGTON D.C. 20036 202 872 6600

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James A. Baker
Nancy Duff Campbell
Deborah C. Costello
Clifford C. Cummings
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ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)

U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS

Margaret P. Grafeld, Director

☒ Release ☐ Excise ☐ Deny

Exemption(s): _____

Declassify: ☐ In Part ☐ In Full

☐ Classify as _____ ☐ Extend as _____ ☐ Downgrade to _____

Date _____ Declassify on _____ Reason _____

1 March 1981

Dear Walt,

First, my congratulations on your appointment to a most important post. It is good to know you are there and that the country and the wider world community will have the benefit of your experience and wisdom.

Next, a problem to which I hope the Department can give energetic attention. A telephone call to me Saturday morning from an American colleague who has been in Buenos Aires for Antarctic Treaty discussions reported that during the night of 27-28 February some lawyers and others at the Center for Legal and Social Studies in Buenos Aires were arrested and taken into custody by as yet unidentified Argentine authorities. That Center is a public-interest group devoted to defense of basic individual rights in Argentina. It has undertaken legal actions on behalf of political prisoners and to assist the families of disappeared persons. Its activities are public and open, conducted from an office at Calle Viamonte 1365 in the Argentine capital.

The Center for Law and Social Policy in Washington, a public-interest law firm with which I am associated, has had professional ties with the Center in Buenos Aires and has served as a channel for A. I. D. funds provided to the Argentine Center. Friday night's arrests are a cause for grave concern. One of the detainees, Dr. Emilio Mignone, a former deputy minister of education, has provided important information to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and had just returned to Buenos Aires from Geneva, where he had been for consultation with the United Nations Human Rights Commission.

I believe the United States should continue to be concerned about measures taken by governments in other countries against

The Honorable

Walter J. Stoessel

Under Secretary for Political Affairs

Department of State

Lot 82D275

Box 3541

(2/17)

lawyers who are carrying out their professional responsibilities in an entirely legitimate and open fashion. I hope the Department will consider it appropriate to take the matter up vigorously with the Argentine Government. No government should receive any impression that the United States has departed from its traditional interest in respect for the basic rights of individuals.

With my very best wishes,

Yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Len", written in a cursive style.

Leonard C. Meeker